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District of Arizona*

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ILLEGAL ALIEN SENTENCED TO 2 YEARS FOR ASSUMING THE IDENTITY OF AN ACTIVE DUTY SERVICEMAN

PHOENIX – Cirilo Espino Ibarra, 26, a Mexican national residing in Mesa, Ariz., was sentenced here today to two years in prison and ordered to pay \$2,306 in restitution, by U.S. District Judge Susan R. Bolton. On March 1, 2007, Espino Ibarra pleaded guilty to the felony offenses of False Statements on a Passport Application and Illegal Alien in Possession of a Firearm.

In the course of his guilty pleas, Espino Ibarra admitted the following facts. With respect to the passport offense, on January 13, 2003, at a passport office in Mesa, Espino Ibarra knowingly made false statements on an application for a United States passport with intent to secure a passport for his own use in violation of federal law. On the actual application, Espino Ibarra provided the name of another individual, with a birth date in 1978, and a place of birth in Westminster, California, all of which he knew was false. In fact, on that date, the real individual named on the passport application was on active duty with the United States Air Force and stationed in Okinawa, Japan. Espino Ibarra admitted that he applied for the passport in order to facilitate his remaining in the United States and traveling back and forth to Mexico. With respect to the firearms offense, on August 18, 2004, Espino Ibarra, while an alien illegally in the United States, knowingly possessed a Hi-Point, Model C, 9mm, semi-automatic pistol, with an obliterated serial number. At the time of this offense, the firearm was stored in a pick-up truck Espino Ibarra had fraudulently purchased using the identity of the person named on the passport application.

Prior to today's sentencing, the serviceman submitted a letter to Judge Bolton which advised her that it had been extremely difficult for him to deal with Espino Ibarra's assumption of his identity and his family has not fully recovered. As she imposed today's sentence, Judge Bolton noted that Espino Ibarra's conduct had caused the serviceman untold problems including delaying the payment of income tax refunds, problems with his credit history and association with criminal history records that had nothing to do with him. In turn, Ibarra acknowledged to the Court that he had known his actions were illegal when he took them and he was "sorry for causing all of this trouble."

Ibarra was in federal custody at the time of sentencing and will remain in custody for the duration of his sentence.

The investigation in this case was conducted by the United States State Department, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, and Gilbert Police Department. The prosecution is being handled by Frederick A. Battista, Assistant U.S. Attorney, District of Arizona, Phoenix.

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